

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) An air conditioner updating method comprising steps of:

a first step of recovering a working refrigerant containing an existing mineral-oil-based refrigerant oil from an existing air conditioner;

a second step of replacing selected old equipment constituting at least a portion of the existing air conditioner including an old heat source unit and an old user unit while reusing as is at least a portion of existing refrigerant piping of the existing air conditioner when updating the air conditioner is complete, the existing refrigerant piping being connected to a new heat source unit, an oil collecting device, and a new user unit, the oil collecting device being disposed in the new heat source unit when updating the air conditioner is complete, the second step being executed after the first step;

a third step of charging the existing air conditioner which is connected to the new heat source unit and the oil collecting device with the existing refrigerant piping since the second step and that has the equipment updated with a new working refrigerant that serves as a cleaning agent comprising an HFC refrigerant containing at least 40 wt% of R32 but containing no R134a refrigerant, the third step being executed after the second step;

a fourth step of washing the existing refrigerant piping of the existing air conditioner that used the existing refrigerant oil by circulating the new working refrigerant such that the existing refrigerant oil remaining in the existing refrigerant piping which is connected to the new heat source unit and the oil collecting device since the third step is carried along with the new working refrigerant during the circulating of the new working refrigerant, and separating the existing refrigerant oil from the working refrigerant in order to remove the existing refrigerant oil from the existing refrigerant piping, the fourth step being executed after the third step; and

a fifth step of changing over a refrigerant circuit being composed of the existing refrigerant piping with the new heat source unit and the new user unit to normal operation state which has the oil collecting device attached thereto, the fifth step being executed after the fourth step.

6. (Previously Presented) The air conditioner updating method recited in claim 5, wherein

during the washing of the existing refrigerant piping, the new working refrigerant is circulated such that the new working refrigerant in a wet state flows through the existing refrigerant piping.

7. (Previously Presented) A refurbished air conditioner comprising:
existing refrigerant piping that was used with an existing air conditioner being composed of an old heat source unit and an old user unit and contains residue of an existing mineral-oil-based refrigerant oil, the existing refrigerant piping being connected the old heat source unit and the old user unit, the existing refrigerant piping being reused as is when updating the air conditioner is complete;

a new heat source unit and a new user unit that are connected together by the existing refrigerant piping with a replaced working refrigerant disposed therein, the new heat source unit and the new user unit replacing the old heat source unit and the old user unit when updating the air conditioner is complete; and

an oil collecting device that is configured such that after the existing refrigerant oil has been changed and before the refurbished air conditioner is run in a normal operating mode, the oil collecting device can draw in the replaced working refrigerant that is being circulated through the air conditioner and separate the existing refrigerant oil that is carried with the replaced working refrigerant, the oil collecting device being disposed in the new heat source unit, the oil collecting device includes an oil collecting container, an inlet pipe, an inlet valve, and an outlet pipe therein,

the replaced working refrigerant being an HFC refrigerant containing at least 40 wt% of R32 that serves as a cleaning agent but contains no R134a refrigerant.

Appl. No. 10/580,909
Amendment dated July 9, 2009
Reply to Office Action of March 24, 2009

8-10. (Cancelled)